



TASK FORCE 9E UPDATE

1ST EDITION

May 25, 2002

TF 9E RAISES THE FLAG

Task Force 9th Engineer officially undertook the mission of support and stability operations within the borders of Multi-National Brigade (East) in the province of Kosovo on May 18, 2002. In a ceremony attended by the outgoing Engineer Task Force, 27th Engineers, and Task Force 9E, the Gila Task Force officially took control of the Engineer Task Force within Multi-National Brigade (East). Brigadier General



Task Force 9th Engineer Company Commanders (left to right), CPTs Stoll, Pelham, Clark, Figlioli, Green.

Huber, Command Sergeant Major Walker, and Command Sergeant Major Beam were on hand as honored guests to witness this ceremony.

In a short yet focused speech, TF 9E Commander, LTC Idlet related that the Gilas were ready to improve on what the previous Engineer Task Forces have already accomplished. LTC Idlet, speaking on behalf of the battalion, stressed that TF 9E was prepared and ready to accomplish any mission.

SAYING GOOD-BYE

MAJ Tedd Wheeler, the Task Force 9E Executive Office, is leaving TF 9E to pursue greater things as he joins MNB(E)'s headquarters team. MAJ Wheeler is leaving the Gila TF a little earlier than expected. Although his outstanding leadership and status as 'Master of the Staff' will be sorely missed, we are happy to see that our higher headquarters will be upgraded with a true Gila jewel. While MAJ Wheeler may be working in a different building now, he and his family will always be recognized as a members of the Gila family. Thanks Sir! We've all benefited from your positive influence.

Yet, as TF 9E losses one field grade, we are fortunate to have MAJ Mark Mirage take over as the TF 9E Executive Officer. MAJ Mirage joins us from the Assistant Division Engineer post with 1ID. He arrives into the Gila family with his wife, Patti, and son, Clayton. Welcome Sir! We look forward to working with you and your family.

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A/9E: BREACH HELL!!

The company has arrived in country and we have assumed the mission here in KOSOVO. Headquarters platoon has taken over operations from A/27th Engineer Battalion this week following the Company IOC (Initial Operational Capabilities) Ceremony. The CO and 1SG had the opportunity to be guest on live television talkshow FESTINA as they expressed their thoughts on the changes in KOSOVO from 1999 to today.



The Commander and First Sergeant on TV FESTIVA

2nd and 3rd (A&O) Platoons assumed a mission role and conducted Quick Reaction Force (QRF) training on Camp Bondsteel. The platoon leadership from both platoons planned and executed training that included riot control, cordon and search as well as minefield extraction training. Utilizing the expertise of A&O's 3rd Squad Leader, the platoons were able to perform superbly during the riot control training culminating with a training event of 2-UH60s from TF 2-1 AVN. This training event allowed soldiers in full riot gear to load the aircraft and take an aerial flight around Camp Bondsteel as well as unloading in a simulated civil disturbance area. The soldiers from both platoons were excited and enjoyed the opportunity to train on non-engineer mission.



Apache soldiers enjoying the flight

1st Platoon provided the support to the company as the other platoons conducted training. They performed an MWR escort mission of the group "Simply SHANIA", bus escorts as well as other battalion essential missions throughout the week.



2nd and 3rd Platoon are ready to go

In general, this is a great beginning to our rotation here in KOSOVO. The officers, non-commissioned officers and soldier would like to say that we miss our family, friends and love ones in Schweinfurt and we will return soon. BREACH HELL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



B/9E: OUTLAWS

Bravo Company performed a Transition of Authority (TOA) Ceremony with Bravo 2-14 Infantry on the 5th of May 2002, and our mission began like a thunderstorm. We were immediately called on to perform a snatch mission where we apprehended a Mr. Shefket Musliu and his body-guard. Mr. Musliu was the commander of an insurgency force in the southern part of Serbia known as the Presevo Valley. He is among 23 individuals who are on President Bush's executive order identifying people deemed threats to peace in the Balkans by supporting extremist violence. All three platoons did an outstanding job during this mission. 1st Platoon soldiers stood out for their situational awareness and quick reactions on the scene. The story of the mission was published in the Stars and Stripes the very next day.

On the 8th of May, we were in the 1-26 Infantry Battalions TOA ceremony with 1-30th Infantry battalion. SPC Benton was the 1st soldier from the company who was individually photographed and mentioned in the Stars and Stripes. He definitely set the standard for the company as the guidon bearer. This was just the start. 2nd platoon lead the company on the next big mission. We proved that we were up to our job of "Work as Infantry" by performing a Cordon and Search, which is normally a Infantry mission. Basically, 2nd Platoon surrounded a house, and then went into the house with the military police to search for illegal materials. They were very successful. The Platoon Leader and Platoon Sergeant did an outstanding job leading their platoon throughout the mission. SGT Bos was also chosen to give our first VIP tour of the city of Gjilane. He was chosen because of his unique ability to quickly understand not only the layout of the city but also the people of the city.

Do we rest, No! On the 14th of May 1st Platoon was given yet another Cordon and Search mission. One of their star players SPC A was at home with his wife to witness the birth of their baby girl, but they continued with the mission. In fact, they continued the mission with great motivation. They were able to apprehend 2 men as they were leaving the apartment, and were able to collect information, which will assist the intelligence community. Just 2 hours after this mission they were called on to perform another search mission. Bravo Company NCOs showed their soldiers why NCOs are the leaders on the ground. They continued to lead from the front throughout both missions.

3rd platoon wins the best supporting effort for all of our missions. They not only supported all the Cordon and Search missions, but they also simultaneously guarded the Serb Church, which is the most important landmark in the entire city. They also patrolled the city to promote a safe and secure environment. Three specific 3rd Platoon Soldiers continue to impress everyone with stories of the city from their 1st tour in Gjilane, which was 2 years ago. They also stand out for their abilities to perform the mission with true concern for the citizens, especially for the children.

Bravo Company does not rest, and every soldier stands out for his professionalism and abilities. We will continue to work hard, train hard, and work hard on the number one mission of keeping every soldier in the company safe.

God Bless,
Outlaw 6





C/9E: DAWGS OF WAR

The Dawgs of War have had a wonderful transition with Cold Steel, Alpha Company, 5th Engineer Battalion (out of Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri). Their unit did a wonderful job helping our company's advance party receive our soldiers and ensure everything was in order.

Higher headquarter guidance sent company equipment inventories and mission assumption plans into a tail-spin, but as usual, the company quickly regained footing and started executing base camp guard duty, vehicle



The kids swarm in to get a picture with the ISG

escort missions, and other taskings a week before the Task Force's Transition of Authority, three days ahead of schedule. Both leaders and soldiers have been working overtime and to make this happen. I am brimming with pride at the efficiency and maturity each soldier showed to make this happen!

The Officers of the company and their drivers have been off Camp Bondsteel conducting reconnaissance and getting familiar with our area, the people and potential missions we may be conducting in the near future.

The company is sponsoring an Albanian school nearby. The school teaches some 300 children in awful conditions – only two classrooms have blackboards, the facilities are filthy, the school-yard fence and gate are rusting to pieces, and the children have inadequate school supplies.

The teachers earn 150 Euros a month and their love for their profession and the



The children line up to receive clothes and school supplies

children is readily apparent. Taking the soldiers out to see such conditions has made a profound affect. We plan to expose more of the soldiers to the kids and to help make the facilities better. We definitely appreciate any support we can get as far as supplies.

The children now wear clothes donated from previous units that have sponsored them. Since the school will start summer break on 20 June, we will focus our efforts over the summer to facility improvements. The children return to school on 01 September and anything that can go to specific children (clothes, candy, pencils, etc) we will package nicely and distribute to each individual.

I want to thank you all again for everything you do to support our soldiers. Your letters, pictures and goodies you send really boost their morale. I appreciate the rear-detachment soldiers and family support group for their unwavering support in trying to keep everyone informed.

Dawg 6



9TH ENGINEER BATTALION



HHC: RENEGADES

Headquarters Company officially took charge this past week during a transfer of authority ceremony in our motor pool bay on Camp Bondsteel. This significant event marked the beginning of our mission in the Balkans. The departing company, HHC, Task Force 27th Engineers “Hardcore”, turned over the reins to the “Headhunters” and departed a few days later. Below, standing tall, looking good soldiers of HHC listen to the outgoing Battalion Commander, LTC Harvey, give praise to his Headquarters Company and wish our Company the best of luck in our new mission.



The following day, LTC Idlet and his assembled Task Force Gila conducted a similar ceremony on the Camp Bondsteel parade field. Below, the former Battalion Executive Officer, Major Wheeler, stands in front of the Gila Battalion with the picturesque Kosovo mountains in the background. This ceremony marked the official beginning of Task Force Gila’s mission in Kosovo.

One of the most rewarding aspects of operating in Kosovo is the chance to make an impact on the lives of the people who live here. Recently, Headquarters Company took advantage of a great opportunity by visiting a small grade school just outside the city of Ferazaj (pronounced “Fer-a-zi”). On May 16th, members of the 27th Engineer Battalion took the CO, XO, SPT PLT SL, and four soldiers to the Konstantine Kristoforihohi Grade School to present donations from family and friends of the 27th Engineers back home in Fort Bragg. The administration and, of course, the children were overwhelmed with delight at the sight of all of our gifts. At left, soldiers pose with the 4th grade students and teacher during a tour of the school.



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Readiness Group leaders are working hard to keep you all informed back home. If you run into any challenges or simply would like information, they are the initial points of contact and are prepared to provide assistance in any way possible throughout the deployment. And in case you forgot, we all miss our loved ones and are looking forward to our return trip home in November.

Headhunters!





A/94E: WARRIORS

Proper Tie-Down Procedures Save Lives

Camp Bondsteel – Soldiers of Alpha Company, 94th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy) learned some valuable life-saving techniques last Sunday, May 22, 2002. As part of a safety awareness initiative, soldiers learned proper tie-down procedures for heavy construction engineering equipment.

Being construction engineers, Alpha Company soldiers operate a majority of unique, heavy construction equipment. This means that they also transport this heavy equipment to wherever the mission calls for it. In order to accomplish these tasks, it is imperative that soldiers understand and demonstrate successful equipment tie-down procedures.

Using the newly-developed 94th ECB(H) *Wolverine Tie Down Book*, a compilation of Technical Manual excerpts as well as Army Safety



MG Craddock presents SSG D a 1 ID Coin

information, the soldiers began improving their proficiency. SSG W.D., the Construction Platoon 2nd Squad Leader and class instructor, instructed soldiers step-by-step on how to properly tie down a D7G dozer. Key safety aspects of tie-down procedures were also highlighted. MG Craddock, the 1st Infantry Division Commanding General, also came by to check out the training. SSG W.D. received a coin from MG Craddock for his instruction.



Construction Platoon soldiers learn proper tie-down procedures for a D7G dozer

With the onset of multiple construction projects, Alpha Company continues to highlight the safety aspects of construction engineering. Throughout the past week, Alpha Company NCOs have been rehearsing and training convoy procedures in preparation for the first horizontal construction project. Their major focus has been on safety, proper risk assessment, and contingency planning for unforeseen circumstances. The NCOs in the platoon are taking turns leading a convoy from Camp Bondsteel, gaining valuable experience on the roads of Kosovo. Transporting heavy construction equipment along the roads of Kosovo will prove to be the most challenging task of any construction mission. With narrow roads, and the local traffic patterns, safety is the top concern among the Alpha Company chain of command. Control measures are still being developed to ensure that the Alpha Company soldiers are safe on the road. Working as a team, Alpha Company will safely execute all missions.





737TH EOD: AFTERSHOCK

The 737th Ordnance Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) has started KFOR 4A off with a big bang! The 737th, which hails from Ft. Belvoir, VA, arrived



737TH EOD Aftershock on Point

in Kosovo on 23 April and has been busy with 37 UXO calls in less than 30 days. The ordnance found has ranged from Yugoslav landmines; U.S. projectiles and NATO sub munitions, to one Guided Missile and a large Improvised Explosive Device (IED).

An IED was found in a building that was undergoing construction in the city of Gnjilane on 17 May. With help from Alpha and Charlie Companies, 9th EN BN, 1,000 sandbags were filled and transported from Camp Bond steel to the incident site in Gnjilane. Many thanks to the soldiers who assisted EOD in helping construct protective works that helped reduce the hazard of the explosive item to protect locals and neighboring buildings. The EOD team was successful in disposing of the item early in the morning of 18 May.

Gnjilane is not the only location in Kosovo that heard loud explosions that day; Camp Bondsteel was treated to the EOD experience when the unit conducted the first of many bi-monthly demo ranges on EOD Hill. The unit disposed of by detonation approximately 450 pounds of Net Explosive Weight! The items destroyed had been munitions that had been in storage at the BLAHA; some items were confiscated during border crossings and cordon and search missions, while others were items found during incidents and were made safe to transport for later disposal at the Demo Range. All the EOD soldiers benefited from the disposal operation because it exposed them to a variety of foreign ordnance that they normally would only see as inert training aids back at home station.



One of three initiations on Demo Hill



Family Readiness Group

Hello to all from Schweinfurt everything is well. We just had a planning meeting to plan events for while our spouses are in Kosovo we are going to have a playgroup for all ages every 2 weeks starting June, trips to Neustadt for crystal shopping, Poland for pottery, Czech, and we are going to do a Bingo and a couple of dinners for a mom or dad night. We are also going to do a potluck and reunion seminar in November to get our families ready to be rejoined with there loved ones. Our first thing is our Memorial Day BBQ at Kessler field on Monday. We are also getting donations of school supplies, clothes and toys to send to Kosovo. Take care and we miss all of you. Be safe and keep your head up your loved ones here have a great support team. If there is anything I can do let me know. Lee Ann

The Gila Adjutant
Editor In Chief

9TH ENGINEER BATTALION

